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ABSTRACT

The Centre for Cultural Resources, founded in 1979 by the Indian government, offers a broad array of training strategies and programs for inservice teacher training. The 5- to 6-week orientation training program is designed to expand the use of practical art activities as teaching vehicles linking education to culture and promoting unification through the understanding of diversity. Following the initial program, selected teachers participate in an in-depth course based on the work they have done in their individual schools. In addition, workshops are offered for elementary and secondary teachers that cover themes in music, drama, mime, and puppetry. The program encourages using arts and crafts as teaching media to raise the level of awareness about India's cultural heritage. The Centre has developed resources on tribal, rural, and classical forms of Indian art and published a series of eight books on the arts of India. It also has compiled resource documents and directories on the arts, and has created a network of artists, teachers, and scholars. In addition, the Centre designs and disseminates cultural kits of recordings and, slides on the plastic and performing arts that are accompanied by a script with an audio tape/record explanation. (NL)

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CELEBRATING DIVERSITY:

An Investigation of the Teacher Training Program of the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training

New Delhi, India

Fulbright Summer Seminar
India, 1988

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IN APPRECIATION

To Brenda Robinson, Director, The Center for International Service, The College of Staten Island, The City University of New York,
for being my first introduction to the notion of thinking about a summer in India;

To Sharada Nayak, Director, The United Sates Education Foundation in India,
for making India feel like home in such a meaningful way;

To Lungching Chiao, Senior Program Officer, The Center for International Programs, and to the U.S. Department of Education,
for making the dream a reality.

INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 1988, I was part of an entourage of 22 educators from across the United States who headed for India on a Fulbright Summer Seminar. And what a summer it was! In six and one half weeks, we were in sixteen cities (not including side trips), heard from more than twice as many experts on a broad array of topics, visited families, toured towns, explored side streets, and tape recorded, tasted, photographed and journal entried our way through the second most populous country in the world.

In many ways, the seminar is still in progress. I'm still synthesizing thousands of impressions, from the Kathakali dance troup, to the haunting Ganges River sounds at dawn, to the shocks of purple, hot pink and turquoise color that surrounded us in turbans and sarees. I'm also synthesizing all that we learned, from the poetic messages found in Calcutta, to the economic ones of Bombay, to the spiritual ones of Varanasi.

And thus, the curriculum project follows! I experience two dilemmas when designing a research project reflecting a piece of India. The first dilemma deals with honing in on a specific piece, slice, part, or topic of India to respond to. Perhaps E.M. Foster in *A Passage to India* said it best with this quote:

"Nothing in India is identifiable, the mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge into something else".

What a challenge that poses for curriculum developers! The fact is that India is a complex place that represents contrasts at every turn.

The second dilemma begins with the reality that no curriculum project can ever capture the intense, profound, and poignant experiences that we had during that unforgettable summer of 1988. It ends with the reality that no curriculum project can adequately say "thank you" enough, or show the reader just how much we learned, or how appreciative we are for having had that experience.

Dilemmas aside, this curriculum project is a research investigation of the teacher training programs that the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training offers the teachers of India. The Centre, known as the CCRT, held

particular interest to me in that my current position involves designing teacher training and organizational development programs at the central office level. My challenges, and those of the CCRT had a correlation. We both grapple with issues of diversity, meeting diverse needs, and offering individualized programs to large numbers of people over a wide geographical expanse. I was curious to find out what type of teacher training programs they design, and how they are implemented; how the logistics were managed; and the content that was provided.

I had the opportunity to interview the Director of the CCRT, as well as some of her talented staff. I observed teacher training workshops, reviewed materials, asked a lot of questions, and read CCRT publications and annual reports to capture the essence of what they are about. The CCRT offers an excellent model not only for teacher training, but for celebrating diversity as a strength. This report will present my findings.

In conclusion, I humbly submit an investigation into the teacher training practices of the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training in New Delhi, India.

THE CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY

The concept of diversity, defined as the condition of being different or of having differences, has tremendous implications for educators everywhere in terms of the students that they teach, the curriculum they design, and the increasing global connections that consistently make our world smaller. The concept of diversity is of particular interest to me at this time, in that I am employed by a school system that must respond to a student population that is becoming increasingly diverse. In fact, Fairfax County Public Schools, in Fairfax, Virginia is becoming so diverse that in November 1988, the Division Superintendent formed a committee comprising 21 staff members- representing all of the departments of the school system, the four administrative areas overseeing the schools, and all principals' associations- to respond to the implications of this growing diversity in what is now a 213 page report entitled *Directions for a System in Transition: Planning for Tomorrow's Children.*

As a specialist in the Office of Professional and Organizational Development in Fairfax County Public Schools, my role includes designing teacher training and professionalism programs that are responsive to the growing diversity that we are experiencing. I was overjoyed to discover the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, which not only designs and implements teacher training programs, but builds its' whole being and purpose around the concept of celebrating diversity. That is, that through the understanding of our own diversity, the Centre believes that we can better understand each other. In addition, the Centre believes that we can use our understanding of our own diversity as a unifying force. That has powerful implications for me in my work in Fairfax County.

The impact of growing diversity in Fairfax County means that there will be a cultural richness brought to our classrooms that will help students participate in the world as global citizens. Our world is already shrinking due to increased technology that allows us immediate access to world news, global affairs, and international flights. As adults, students will not function in an enthnocentric, homogeneous world, but in a changing world marked by diversity. Arthur Costa, past president of The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and currently Professor of Education, California State University, Sacramento, California, captures our challenge as educators with this quote:

"Effective citizens in the new age will be global citizens. They will understand, work effectively within, and strive to improve the interrelations and interdependence of the diverse cultures of the world. They will understand how we are intertwined economically, ecologically, aesthetically, technologically, socially, politically, and spiritually. Intelligence for the new age will be global intelligence." (FCPS, 1989)

Dr. Loretta C. Webb, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Staff Development, Fairfax County Public Schools, identifies the goals of curriculum and staff development that are multicultural based on a specific set of assumptions about diversity. These assumptions have a direct correlation to the assumptions and goals that the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training in New Delhi foster. They include the following:

" 1. Racial, ethnic, and religious groups are making an effort to preserve their identities and cultural traditions.

2. The complexity of the varied cultures that comprise this society demands broader educational experiences for students.

3. The challenge of cultural pluralism can be achieved only if multicultural objectives are integrated into existing curricula and implemented to ensure real and meaningful cultural equity.

4. Success in teaching multicultural education depends upon teacher attitudes, perceptions, and understandings of different cultures." (Webb, 1989)

It feels particularly exciting to me to note that while we are just now becoming aware about the growing need to plan for diversity, and struggle with strategies for curriculum design, teacher training, and student involvement to reflect that trend, The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, hereafter cited as CCRT, offers us a model that meets the challenge.

BACKGROUND OF THE CENTRE FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES AND TRAINING

The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), which began on May 21, 1979, is an autonomous organization funded in full by the Indian Government. The CCRT office is located in Bahawalpur House, Bhagwandas Road, New Delhi, India. Miss Premlata Puri, Director of the CCRT, discussed the conceptual framework for the CCRT during an interview on August 5, 1988. She explained that after independence from the British in 1947, India needed to examine, embrace and appreciate its own culture. India needed to link education to its culture, and invite Indians to understand and appreciate their own diversity. Puri went on to discuss the fact that India could become a more unified country if they could understand themselves, their fellow Indians, and the element that they all have in common which was and continues to be diversity.

Dr. Puri recalled the historical development of the planning of teacher training within the CCRT, beginning with posing the question "What should every Indian know?" In the early days, the CCRT centered its curriculum and training around the areas of music and dance. She recalled the limited experiences on the the part of the participants in those early days. Now the CCRT has expanded the content areas to include far more than music and dance, and the CCRT offers a broad array of training strategies and programs. What remains consistent throughout the study of various art forms, are the similarities that exist among the Indian population and their expression of thought (e.g., the study of music through the various marriage songs among the states; how the same sentiments are expressed through different languages).

In the1987 Annual Report of the CCRT, as well as in interviews with Dr. Puri and Dr. Shobita Punja, broad objectives were discussed. The first objective, which has the greatest implication for work with planning for diversity within Fairfax County, is to organize a variety of in-service teacher training programs. These teacher training programs are designed to meet many goals. For example, the training is designed to enable teachers from different regions to learn from each other, share their culture, appreciate their heritage and diversity. The training also enables teachers from a variety of disciplines to interact with each other in a more interdisciplinary and enriching way. The training teaches and encourages teachers to use arts and crafts as a teaching medium for honoring diversity.

The training also raises the awareness level of India's cultural heritage for teachers, and uses art as a medium for expressing that richness with students. This leads to a holistic goal of spiritual, emotional and intellectual connections for the teachers and ultimately the students when learning about the rich diversity that is India.

Additional objectives that the CCRT responds to include developing resources on tribal, rural and classical forms of Indian art; compiling resource documents and directories on the arts; linking scholars and artists with teachers throughout the country; setting up a library so that teachers can learn more about artistic and cultural development in India and elsewhere; and to design and disseminate cultural kits, recordings, slide-tape presentations and films for student and teacher use throughout the country.

The CCRT has designed a variety of programs and strategies which respond to the noble and challenging objectives that have been designed. For one, they include a variety of training programs such as orientation courses, refresher courses, workshops and seminars. They offer extension programs involving other schools, museums, camps, and community extension opportunities, as well as in-depth training in puppetry. The CCRT has also developed a detailed evaluation and feedback process that is in place for every program. Evaluation and feedback takes the form of quarterly reports, refresher courses, seminars for evaluation and feedback, and awards for teachers.

In addition, the CCRT has developed a broad collection of resources. They include audio-visual materials, books, magazines, journals, art objects, films, cultural kits designed by the Centre, educational games, slide-tape presentations, etc. The Centre has also designed a variety of newsletters, monographs, charts, picture packets, and workbooks to foster the concepts are cultural richness and diversity. The Centre takes great pride in awarding scholarships to talented and deserving students. (CCRT, Annual Report1987)

THE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS OF THE CCRT

(The following synthesized from interviews with P. Puri, S. Punja, CCRT site visits, and annual report material)

The Orientation Phase

The training program begins with the orientation phase. Teachers study for 5-6 weeks, on an every day/all day basis. The purpose of the orientation is to gain information, understanding, and knowledge about the development of Indian culture, while expanding their teaching repertoire of strategies for using practical art activities as a teaching vehicle. Teachers learn about philosophy, aesthetics, architecture, sculpture, painting, dance, music, theater, folk arts and handicrafts from a variety of experts, museum visits, lectures, individual investigation, and discussion. The purpose of this study is for teachers to gain an appreciation for all that India has to offer, and to bring it back home to their schools and their students so that they too can experience that same appreciation.

The Refresher Course Phase

After two years of training, selected teachers are invited back for participation in the refresher course based on the work they've done in their schools and the ways in which they have integrated the material presented from the orientation phase of the training. The refresher course offers greater depth of study (e.g., *The Roles of the Schools in the Conservation of our National Cultural Heritage*), includes students from all across the country, provides detailed evaluation and feedback opportunities, and helps teachers to understand the cultural development of a particular region of the country.

The Workshop Phase

The workshops are designed either for elementary or secondary teachers, and each have a particular theme, such as music, drama, mime, and so on. Dr. Puri discussed a particular workshop where teachers integrated the aspects of history and science with crafts and folk art. What fascinating products they designed based upon that integration! The workshops provide practical training in folk art, and ask participants to develop curriculum units using the art form being discussed during that workshop.

A unique aspect of the workshops includes puppetry. Puppetry has been a traditional medium to teach about Indian myths and legends, and the CCRT expands upon the use of puppets as a teaching strategy. The use of

puppetry is a good integration of many of the art forms that the CCRT supports, such as painting, sculpture, music, dance, and drama. I was able to observe a puppetry workshop during one of my investigative visits to the CCRT, and enjoyed seeing teachers create their own puppets, design scripts for them and prepare their presentations.

The CCRT also offers seminars for administrators, so that they can be enlightened about the training processes and the cultural heritage that their teachers are incorporating into their curriculum. The message that is shared includes the belief that art and culture do not belong in museums alone. They are part of every day life, and an aesthetic sensibility should be fostered within each Indian student.

The Evaluation and Feedback Phase

In a country as large and diverse as India, a well developed evaluation and feedback program is crucial to the success of the training. Feedback from teacher participants is structured on a regular basis from both rural and urban areas. The CCRT looks as frequency of usage with program and kit materials, the design and implementation of lesson plans, and effectiveness of programs and experiments as part of its evaluation program. In addition, the CCRT receives feedback from trained teachers through quarterly reports, during refresher courses and visits to schools, through evaluation seminars and special meetings.

The Use of Materials

Perhaps one of the most impressive aspects of my interviews and visits at the CCRT was the review of materials that were design to foster teacher training. For example, the CCRT has designed and published a series of eight guide books on the arts of India. They include an introduction on the background of creative arts, literature, sculpture, architecture, painting, music, dance, theater and puppetry. These paperback workbooks not only contain an in-depth research background don the particular art form, but they go on to break it down into expression in each region of the country. These are scholarly works that are easily understandable, well organized, and readily transferrable for classroom use. The CCRT has also created kits of 400 slides on the plastic arts, and 400 slides on the performing arts, complete with a script and tape/record explanations. In addition, the CCRT provides posters, photographs, charts, records and films to support the concepts taught within each art form. The CCRT also uses a variety of publications to provide support and update teacher participants in between training experiences.

The CCRT also implements a Cultural Talent Search Scholarship program for 300 students each year. The scholarship supports study and enrichment experience for selected talented youth in the art.

IMPLICATION OF THE CCRT TRAINING FOR FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fairfax County Public Schools is the tenth largest school system in the United States, and one that is very diverse. The school system spends considerable effort getting synchronized, and looking for quality control. For example, we have instituted a program of studies that is to be interpreted in the same way throughout the county. My investigation into the CCRT was inspiring because it offered ways to structure teacher training to highlight differences as a unifying theme, and in a celebratory manner.

I can envision using the CCRT format of orientation, refresher courses, subject specific workshops and follow-up seminars for administrators as the teacher training structure to examine and learn about our own students' diversity. The school system might consider the use of art forms as the medium to ask students to share the attributes of their own country as well as to learn about the countries of their fellow students. The use of art as a unifying force to discuss what we all have in common in terms of architecture, dance, literary themes, and expression may be very viable and meaningful.

I also think that we have a lot that we can learn from the use of puppetry as a teaching method. Puppets acting as a "third person" can make the classroom less threatening, assist students in discussing information, and create a unifying force for all the students involved.

There is much we can learn from in terms of the materials and products designed from the CCRT. Their booklets on each art form might be replicated using different country contexts so that our teachers can learn about the backgrounds of the countries that our students represent. Teachers seeing slides, being given publications and posters that teach them about the art forms of countries around the world can give them a bridge of common information to help them teach their culturally diverse students populations.

Finally, we can learn from the CCRT mindset in general: that diversity is a strength to be highlighted, admired, appreciated and celebrated. If we could look at our own diversity in the same light, a tremendous resource is added to our school system, knowledge base and classroom experience. The

CCRT model is an effective model for positive introspection and unification; two processes that we can only benefit from in our own public schools.

CONCLUSION

Investigating the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training was an exciting process. It is amazing to see all that the Centre has accomplished in ten short years. Their training program is varied and balanced; their materials are widespread and well researched; their publications and audio-visual support materials are practical and easy to implement. But one of the most exciting things about the Centre is how they have used the concept of diversity as a unifying force in celebrating all that is special about India.

So often we seek to identify differences. Rather, the CCRT looks for strands of similarities throughout all of the art forms in each of the geographical regions as a place to begin our learning. Through this process, the CCRT has trained thousands of teachers, has implemented a thorough evaluation and feedback process, has published a variety of support materials, and has supported hundreds of students and teachers with special scholarships as well.

The CCRT training procedures offer direct implications for school systems in the United States, particularly those which are in the process of changing to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. The use of art as a unifying theme, and the approach of celebrating diversity through similarities rather than differences presents a powerful training model for consideration.

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